



# Marilyn Burgess

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Harris County has 2.7 million potential jurors after jury wheel reconstitution led by District Clerk Marilyn Burgess**

**Judge Latosha Lewis Payne, Judge Rabeea Collier,  
and Sheriff Ed Gonzalez also participated in the ceremony**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Houston (TX) Wednesday, November 13, 2024 – Harris County now has 2,752,109 potential jurors after the county's jury wheel was reconstituted today during a ceremony led by District Clerk Marilyn Burgess. Traditionally referred to as the jury wheel, this is the database from which Harris County residents are randomly selected to be summoned as potential jurors for over 100 statutory courts, including Harris County District Courts, County Courts, and Justice of the Peace courts, as well as for grand juries.

The Honorable Judge Latosha Lewis Payne, Local Administrative Judge and Presiding Judge over the 55<sup>th</sup> Harris County District Court; Honorable Judge Rabeea Collier, Presiding Judge of the 113<sup>th</sup> Harris County District Court and Jury Committee Chair on the Board of District Judges; and Sheriff Ed Gonzalez also participated in the ceremony, which entailed the electronic reset of the database and the signing of the pertinent documents.

"Decades ago, Harris County used metallic cylinders for the jury summoning process and small pieces of paper with names printed on them were randomly pulled from the cylinder to select those that would be sent a jury summons. Now, the process is fully computerized. Technology has certainly changed our world and the jury summoning process is no exception," said District Clerk Burgess.

"The reconstitution of the jury wheel signifies our dedication to improving efficiency and transparency within our jury system. I commend the great work done by the District Judges and District Clerk Burgess in ensuring our courts are a true reflection of justice for all,"

said Judge Latosha Lewis Payne, who is the Local Administrative Judge and presides over the 55<sup>th</sup> Harris County District Court.

“Serving as a juror is a profound civic responsibility, allowing for citizens to actively participate in upholding justice within our community. Jurors play a critical role in the administration of the American justice system, ensuring that it functions impartially and protects constitutional rights while adhering to principles of fairness. I urge all who are summoned to jury duty to fulfill this obligation with dedication and a strong commitment to justice,” said Judge Rabeea Collier, Presiding Judge of the 113<sup>th</sup> Harris County District Court and Jury Committee Chair on the Board of District Judges.

“The reconstitution of Harris County’s jury wheel today highlights the significant civic responsibility entrusted to our community. By updating the jury selection process, we enhance efficiency and reaffirm our commitment to fair and accessible justice for everyone,” said Sheriff Ed Gonzalez.

The previous jury wheel started in December 2022. Under the current jury selection plan, the wheel is reconstituted every two years in order to add new citizens, remove those who have moved out of Harris County, and incorporate updated addresses. The jury wheel consists of all citizens over 18 residing in Harris County that have a Texas Driver License or a State of Texas Identification Card, or are registered to vote in Harris County.

Under the Burgess administration, the District Clerk’s Office (DCO) is striving to make Harris County juries more diverse, so they reflect our population. The DCO has also made jury service more convenient with online pre-registration and a significant pay increase.

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#### About the Harris County District Clerk’s Office

The Harris County District Clerk’s Office (DCO) supports over 100 courts and is registrar, recorder, and custodian of all court pleadings, instruments, and papers for legal proceedings in the District Courts and the County Criminal Courts at Law. The DCO is also responsible for summoning Harris County residents for jury service. Other duties include providing authorities with court orders, securing trial evidence, and maintaining the court registry, as well as assessing and collecting court costs, fines, and fees, and processing passport applications.